

RECKLESS RALPH'S

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.
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THE GIANTS MARCH PAST

J. V. B. Stewart Hunter

In Britain, today, there is little paper to spare, and book reviews of even the most important works are frequently confined to a few terse lines. Yet a book has just been published which the great National Daily and Sunday newspapers have heralded with banner headlines, and which has required two large reprints within a week of its publication. It is called **BOYS WILL BE BOYS**, it is written by E. S. Turner, and bears the imprint of the well-known publishing house of Michael Joseph, London.

To collectors of the American Dime Novel, the British branch of the hobby is probably very much of a mystery. It need remain one no longer, for in this fascinating book of nearly three hundred pages is traced the whole history of the British boys papers, "bloods," and "penny dreadfuls." Here are all the giants of our boyhood in one grand processional march past—Sweeney Todd, Varney the Vampire, Springheeled Jack, Dick Turpin leading the glittering company of Gentlemen of the Road, Sexton Blake followed by the eager sleuths, the great host of schoolboy characters which Charles Hamilton made famous, and so on, right up to the latest radio serial thriller.

Mr. Turner starts right at the roots a hundred years ago, when the penny dreadful was filled with rattling skeletons, slaving were-wolves, and grinning specters ghastly in the lurid glow of green phosphorescence. He traces the progress of the "blood" from the Lloyd romances, through the long

series of Reynolds' MYSTERIES, to the era of the Highwayman romance with its masked riders on lonely heaths, its spectacular Dick Turpins and gallant Claude Duvals. There is an engrossing chapter on Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street, that classic in English "blood literature." The long Jack Harkaway saga has also a chapter to itself, as has Sexton Blake the detective whose name is better-known in England than that of Sherlock Holmes.

The rise of Lord Northcliffe marked the beginning of a new epoch in British journalism, and the chapter which describes the rapid success of his long string of boys papers is intensely interesting. With this chapter the author abandons the chronological set-up and groups his later material under subject headings.

Here, the American reader will commence to recognize long-familiar faces. "Pure Invention," for instance, gives pride of place to Jack Reade, and Frank Wright as they appeared in the Aldine Libraries; under "More Detectives" we meet not only that motley host of Aldine detectives who were, of course, American importations, but the incomparable Nick Carter treated at length. Buffalo Bill and Deadwood Dick divide the honors of the chapter "Wild West."

So the American reader will not feel that he is travelling entirely uncharted trails, but perhaps the greater charm of the volume will be in the new vistas it offers.

The author is not himself a collector, but his research has obviously been thorough, he "carries his learning lightly," and the whole book is

written in a witty, colorful style which makes it a joy to read; it has many extracts from the books dealt with, and is well illustrated.

It can, in fact, be recommended to every collector as a really good buy. The address of the publisher is Michael Joseph, Limited, 26 Bloomsbury Street, London, W. C. 1, England. The price is ten shillings and sixpence, which means that two dollars fifty "real money" will cover cost and mailing charges.

HENTY HINTS

#1

Redskin & Colonist

As a start on Henty hints I think one of his early American stories as good as any. Then too I understand that this is one of his rare titles, or at least I have found it so.

The Hero of this story is Guy Neville and the story is about the Indian uprising against Jamestown and the outlying settlements.

This happened at the time of the death of Chief Powhatan who had proven many times a friend of the Whites. So when Opecananough, his brother, became Chief, being unfriendly, he started raids against Jamestown and other settlements.

Guy Neville lived on a Plantation some miles from Jamestown and being warned by Ponta, son of Chief Powhatan, who was a friend of Guy's that the Indians were on the war path they entered their blockhouse and prepared to defend themselves.

These settlers knowing that they had no hope of aid from outside defended themselves but knew matters were hopeless as to resisting very long. Mr. Neville knowing they could not hold out much longer offered all the chance of slipping away in the dark and making their escape but none would desert their families or friends. Mr. Neville commanded Guy and Shanti, a young Negro slave to do this and they were successful in reaching the forest and river.

Shortly after leaving they hear a loud explosion and know that Mr. Neville has kept his word and blown up the Blockhouse rather than be taken by the Indians.

Guy and Shanti escape up the river

in their canoe and leaving the river they tramp thru the forest for days to another river with the hope of getting down to the coast where they might have a chance of rescue.

After many days and many adventures they do reach the coast and hiding out for several weeks they at last see a vessel sailing down the coast. They launch their canoe and paddle out and are taken on board and ascertain that this vessel had been sent to America to aid the Colonist when word reached England of the Indian trouble.

The Indian trouble being soon over Guy returns to his fathers Plantation and resumes living and working there. So ends the story.

This story is a little off the usual Henty style but right on a very nice little story. My copy of this book is a Hurst edition and also in this volume is two short stories, Burton & Son and The Ranch in the Valley. This last story is the first story in the title Peril & Prowess, and might say that it has more the style of Ellis than of Henty.

Col. Henty toured the United States with the Prince of Wales and it was then he obtained his information and data for such stories as the above, Redskin & Cowboy and In the Heart of the Rockies.

I know that all readers also know that other American Henty stories are Under Drakes Flag. True to the Old Flag, With Lee in Virginia and With Wolfe in Canada. I think too might be added Out on the Pampas.

Similar stories along this same subject and time that readers might enjoy are The Belt of Seven Totems by Kirk Munroe and Standish of Standish by Jane G. Austin, Uncrowning a King, Ellis. This last story I just a short time ago had the pleasure of reading being a gift from our good friend Wm. M. Burns.

I had in mind sometime back that I might write an article on why boys don't read anymore but I think this is easily answered.

The main reason is that we are fast losing the American Home the old-time Family home. The Americans today have to be amused and are on the go all the time, no time for family life or reading.

We all know the reason for this, the

Automobile, the Movie and Sport Centers, etc.

A few months back I visited a Boy Scout Troop and asked the Scoutmaster if I could talk to some of the boys about books and reading. He called about five or six and on asking them if they liked and did read I received a couple of faint yeses. I went on to ask them about Alger, Ellis, Henty and Munro and I don't think one of them ever heard of them and the same goes for the Scoutmaster who is in his thirties.

Calling to see a friend a while back, he was not at home but his son about seventeen was. I asked him if he read books and he told me very much that he loved Dog stories and Sport stories. I invited him to come over and borrow from me, that I had several good Dog stories and one Sport story he certainly should enjoy as it was written about the High School he attended. Two months have gone by and no loans so far. I am afraid I will have to give it up.

It is no wonder for we old timers know that say from 1905 and up there has been no outstanding writers or really good ones. All the old ones we know and loved had passed on.

My idea now is, if the Roundup will give me the space to outline some of Henty's stories and if it does not reach any boys it might renew interest for some of the old Bucks.

In closing I think this is very good and covers the subject. It is from The Booktrade Wants.

I OPPOSE

As an Antiquarian Bookseller, I
unalterably oppose
And shall do my best to quell a
tendency of these
New-fangled interventions, spawned
with sound and speed,
That blast the good intentions of
all who want to read.
I refer, with dire precision, to
the Raucous Radio,
To the tiresome Television, and
the moron Movie show,
To the super-serious Comic, on
which our children feed,
That for reasons economic, give
them no books to read.
Yes, call me an old fogey, who's
way behind the time,
But I will fight this bogey, with
reason and with rhyme;

For what a generation these
modern monsters breed,
A brash and brainless nation that,
knows not how to read.
Willie Penmore.

NEWSY NEWS

by Ralph F. Cummings

Old Authors Farm, R. R. 1, via Morrisburg, Ont., Canada, is asking \$1.00 each for Beadles Frontier Series and Adventure Library. They call them Wild West dime novels, and they say they are offering them at half price. Can you beat that.

A lot of the members have written me, and asked my why not let each member keep his number, instead of new numbers every year, as it mixes the members up, so half of them don't know their own number, so hereafter each member will have and keep his own number, fellows.

Prof. Johannsen says he understands his two books on Beadles Novels, of all kinds, etc., will be out May 15th, boxed, price \$15.00. About 1000 pages, and well illustrated. Size 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ x10 inches. They sure will be worth their weight in gold, to anyone's collection, and well worth the prices.

At the time this Roundup will be out, my latest reproduction. It is from a rare copy of Frank Tousey's—The 5 cent Weekly Library, No. 48. Cavalry Jack in the Swamp, by Col. Ralph Fenton, price \$1.00.

Almer J. Huston, bookseller, 92 Exchange St., Portland, Maine, died on Nov. 23rd, 1948, at the age of 79. Mr. Huston was born in Lincolnville, Me., and opened his first shop in Rockland, Maine, in 1890. The shop was incorporated in 1909 as the Huston-Tuttle Book Co. by Mr. Huston and Charles E. Tuttle. In 1910 Mr. Huston sold his interest, and purchased the bookshop of Alfred L. Colesworthy in Portland, Maine, which shop he operated till his death. Mr. Huston was an authority on Maine law books and Maine local history, and was a booster for Maine novels (copied from the Antiquarian Bookman, 12-25-48.)

Street and Smith's "Boys of America," started with No. 1, Oct. 5th, 1901 and ended with No. 107, Oct. 17th 1903.

It was Time Mag., Nov. 22nd, 1943,

pages 108-109 that had the nice article in it on Penny Bloods, etc., sent in by Jesse Harriman, ye editor Cummings put it in as Newsweek, my mistake, I'm sorry.

Will give \$1.00 worth of novels for every new member brought in during the year of 1949, so fellows, let's see how many dollars worth of novels you can get of your wants from my various ads, etc. Send in your new members to Dime Novel Roundup and Happy Hours Brotherhood. Let's make this a big year.

W. B. Poage, 505 So. Newport Ave., Tampa 6, Fla., wants these two books by Henty and Ellis. "To Herat & Cabul and In the Hands of the Cave Dwellers. And Ellis' The Phantom of the River in the Days of the Pioneers and the Broken Arrow, also Munro's The White Conquerors and a cheap copy of The Death Ship, by Russell.

A fine article and list of the books of Horatio Alger, Jr., appeared in the Antiquarian Bookman, 62 W. 45th St., New York 19, N. Y. for Nov. 13th 1948. I understand this copy is selling for \$1.00 now.

The Le Blanc's, father and son, had a very nice writeup in one of the Fall River Papers a while back.

A word of apology to correspondents:

Because of severe physical injuries and serious illness resulting from a holdup fight with some "plug-uglies," I have been unable to answer letters personally or properly attend to mail. This encounter happened some time ago but the disastrous results linger on. Losing the scrap was bad enough, even though the odds were all against me, but to quote that pugilistic classic,

"I was robbed!"

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Wm. M. Claggett, 1636 Pearl Street, Jacksonville 8, Fla. Has the Lives and Adventures of Frank and Jesse James in nice condition to trade for other novels. This is a real old timer.

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January 1936 to March 1948.

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